

EAST LONGMEADOW PUBLIC SCHOOLS

180 Maple Street
East Longmeadow, MA. 01028-2788



Achievement *Accountability*

Gordon Smith
Superintendent of Schools

Pamela Blair
Asst. Superintendent for Business

March 30, 2020

Dear ELPS Families,

First, I want to thank everyone for their incredible patience, adaptability, and cooperation during this very unique time. Since deciding to suspend regular operations and close schools on the afternoon of March 13th, we have been able to provide outreach to our students and families in order to remain connected with them and to provide continuous learning opportunities for our students to build skills, review previously taught material, and participate in enrichment activities. The first and foremost goal of our outreach is to maintain a positive connection with our students and families and provide support for their continued well-being during these uncertain times. Our students and families have been really receptive to all of the different types of outreach coming from the five schools, and this has made it very successful over the last two weeks.

As people know, Governor Baker announced on Wednesday, March 25th that all public schools would remain closed until May 4th. The ELPS formal outreach to students and families began on March 19th with staff from all five schools providing an outreach program with the goal described in the previous paragraph. Teachers have used a variety of formats to connect with their students including video, e-mail, posted assignments through Google Classroom, activities and challenges messaged through Bloomz, and live meetings through Google Hangout/Meet, just to name a few. Additionally, we have utilized some of the personalized learning tools such as i-Ready, ST Math, and Albert i-o with which our students had been working at many different grade levels. These tools allow students to engage the learning standards in specific subjects at the student's current point of learning. Now, with the announcement of this longer closure, the ELPS Leadership Team has been meeting to ensure that our outreach over this extended time of closure continues to successfully support our students.

This week, families will hear from their children's schools regarding any changes that will be made to the outreach to our families. Building administrators are working with department chairpeople, content-area teachers, and grade level teachers to coordinate how and when staff reaches out in order to provide a more uniform structure and schedule for families and for ELPS staff. Our goal is to follow the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education that students should be engaged with their school work while at home for approximately half of a regular school day. This should allow families to better plan for their daily schedule and know when assignments will be received.

We feel that one of the most important elements in learning is the targeted feedback received throughout the learning process. Our teachers will continue to focus on providing feedback to students as they engage and complete assignments in order to help guide them and support them in making consistent progress. As we continue to move into this extended closure, we also will be following the recommendation from the Commissioner of Education that the work completed during this time be recorded using a credit/no credit system. Assignments and projects completed by students during this time will be counted and included with all of the information reviewed when determining a student's overall progress toward successfully completing a specific course and/or grade level. Your student's school will be providing more information on how this will be implemented at each specific school.

Throughout this extended closure, we will continue to work together with staff, students, and families to ensure that everyone moves through this very unique time in a positive and successful way. We appreciate all of your support and help during this time.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon C. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gordon C. Smith
Superintendent of Schools